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ABSTRACT

The dependence on sheltered learning environments often accorded the slow learner, combined with his inadequate self-concept and lack of realistic occupational exposure, can contribute to illogical decision-making skills, particularly in the area of employment. This course outline is designed to provide the slow learner with self-assessment tools, decision-making skills, occupational information, on-the-job exposure and final job placement. The use of role models, audiovisual aids and the student's own knowledge in a group setting will enable the slow learner to develop a sense of self-potency that will be the result of his own interest and effort. While this course has not yet been implemented, educators should find value in the course outline of activities and materials, and can adapt it to meet their particular needs. (Author)

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Jobsearch: A Career Planning Course for Slow Learners in Secondary Schools

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Ypsilanti, Michigan
1975

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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PHILOSOPHY

The student who is a slow learner, for whatever reason, often carries the extra burden of a poorly developed self-concept. The major emphasis of his formal education has been on basic and human skills with little exposure to the vast stores of occupational information. The dependence on sheltered learning environments, often accorded the slow learner, combined with his inadequate self-concept and lack of realistic occupational exposure can contribute to illogical decision-making skills, particularly in the area of employment. This student, more so than others, needs to develop an accurate means of assessing himself, in terms of his strengths, abilities and interests. The slow learner should have the background in the integration of self-assessment and decision-making skills to evaluate himself as he relates to the occupational world. He also deserves to have as much information as possible concerning various jobs and life-style alternatives on which to base his decisions. It is the intent of this course to provide the slow learner with self assessment tools, decision-making skills, occupational information, on-the-job experience and final job placement. The use of role models, audio-visual aids, and the student's own knowledge in a group setting will enable the slow learner to develop a sense of self-potency that will be the result of his own interest and effort.

STUDENT COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 16 week course is designed to aid the secondary student who has met limited academic success in planning his future as a working, contributing member of society. Major emphasis will be given to the identification of work values, goal setting, decision-making, occupational information, and job placement as they relate to the adolescent who will soon finish his formal education. Students will be actively involved in determining the informational direction of the course and will be called upon to participate in group discussions and other work-related activities outside the classroom. The students' course work shall culminate in actual job placement in full or part-time employment within one year. The instructional team shall act in a consultation capacity to aid the former student in initial job placement if he has not found employment upon completion of the course. Follow-up on the student's adjustment to the working environment will be conducted on a voluntary basis and using group counseling procedures whenever possible, often integrating the recently employed graduate with current students.

PERSONNEL

One teacher specializing in education for the slow learner

One counselor specializing in occupational information and decision-making, and group process.

One paraprofessional or student volunteer to keep personnel records of the students and other details essential to the functions of the course (i.e., correspondence regarding guest speakers, field trips, etc.)

CLASS SIZE

15 - 20 students

TIME

16 weeks, 2 periods per day (preferably the last two periods)

Credit - 1 credit that will not be applied to any major or minor field of concentration

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the individual's work values and life-style objectives through group discussions, projects, role playing, and other value clarification techniques.

2. To adopt a functional decision-making skill which allows for the integration of the student's knowledge of self and values with the occupational information available to him.

3. To introduce the student to various people involved in several occupational levels through lecturers(guests from business and industry, returning students who are recently employed) and work visitation experience.

4. To introduce such employment skills as interviewing techniques, resume and application, and general work responsibilities.

5. To secure job placement within one year of the student's completion of the course. (The instructional team shall act in a consulting role, with the student doing the actual job-hunting.)

RESOURCE MATERIALS

1. VOCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, John O. Crites, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, 1969

2. GO HIRE YOURSELF AN EMPLOYER, Richard K. Irish, Doubleday Anchor Books, New York, 1973

3. WORKING, Studs Terkel, Pantheon Books, New York, 1974

4. WORK IN AMERICA, Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education & Welfare, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1972

5. JOB GUIDE FOR YOUNG WORKERS, U.S. Employment Service

6. VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE QUARTERLY, National Vocational Guidance Association

7. MANPOWER MAGAZINE, Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare

8. VALUE CLARIFICATION, Simon & Kirschbaum, Hart Publishing Co., New York, 1972

9. COMPOSITION FOR PERSONAL GROWTH, Hawley, Simon & Britton, Hart Publishing Co., New York, 1973

10. DICTIONARY OF OCCUPATIONAL TITLES, Volumes I & II, U.S. Dept. of Labor, GPO

11. SELF-DIRECTED SEARCH, John L. Holland, Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, ---

12. VIEW Program

AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

1. "Job Interview: Whom Would You Hire?" (3 young men interview for a trainee position. Viewer is asked to select the best applicant.) 16 minutes; color; Dimension, Churchill; 1967.

2. "A Sense of Purpose" (goals, personal fulfillment, lifestyle analysis) 16 minutes; color; Columbia Pictures, LCA; 1972

3. "Where The Action Is" (examines the value of vocational and technical training) 27 Minutes; color; USOE: USNAC; 1967

4. "When I'm Old Enough, Goodbye" (the dropout's realization that formal education is necessary for job security and advancement) 28 minutes; DeRochemont; 1962

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLNE

Week I - A. Movie - "Where The Action Is" & discussion
B. Value Clarification
1. Fall-out Shelter (job stereotypes)
2. Personal Obituary (establishes job objectives)
3. Job Advertisements (students write job descriptions for newspapers from those they know)
4. "What's My Line?" (a variation)
C. Establish group members as informational source (How many jobs canyou think of? What do these people do?)

Week II- Work Values, continued
1. Internal/External Rewards
2. Accomplishments & Achievements (discovering the nature of these helps the student assess his strengths and weaknesses)
3. Job Auction (various work values and life-style values are auctioned off)
4. Risk-taking - continuums (helps the student to broaden his base of alternatives before taking action on a dilemma)

Weeks III- & IV A. Decision-making & Goal-setting
1. Movie - "A Sense of Purpose"
2. GAP (goals, alternatives, probable outcomes)
3. Dilemma (fictional at first, then evolving from group members' experience)
B. General Work Responsibilities
1. punctuality
2. personal hygiene
3. dress
4. attitude
C. Self-Directed Search (Holland) - students assess their areas of interests and match them with 456 listed and described occupations.
D. Using members' knowledge of occupations and any new information gained from the SDS, an informational pool will be established from which the class will choose topics for guest speakers and work visitations.

Week V - A. Letters of Inquiry
1. form
2. spelling & punctuation
3. letters will actually be sent at a later date when the student begins his search for employment. At this point, the letters will be placed in the student's file.
B. First Speaker - this presentation will be videotaped so that students who are absent, or those who wish to review it, will be able to see it again. (After two or three semesters, the course should have a sizable videotape library of these presentations.)

C. Writing a Resume to fit at least three possible jobs
   1. form
   2. spelling
   3. These, like the letters of inquiry, will be filed away for future reference.

Week VI - A. Using the Newspaper and Telephone Book
   1. Where the jobs are located
   2. Job Descriptions
   3. Wages
   4. Contact personnel
   5. Any requested information

B. Job Inverview
   1. Movie - "Job Interview: Whom Would You Hire?"
   2. Group discussion of elements of the interview
   3. Role playing - each student will rehearse being both the interviewee and the interviewer. These will be videotaped for immediate playback and evaluation.

C. Second Speaker - videotaped

Week VII- A. Applications
   1. various forms
   2. universally requested information
   3. spelling & sentence structure
   4. These will also be filed for future use

B. Third Speaker - videotaped

C. Individual Information-gathering based on SDS results

Weeks VIII-XV Revolving Sub-group activities

A. 3-day work visitations arranged by the student and instructional team. The student will be placed on-the-job in an area of his particular interest. He carries the responsibility of gathering as much information as possible (photos, interviews, etc) for his presentation to the group at a later date. Each student will make three visitations before the end of the course.

B. Three more speakers drawn from the students' informational pool - videotaped

C. Review of Goal-setting & Decision-making Skills
Movie - "When I'm Old Enough, Goodbye"

D. Individual Discovery Days - the students write actual resumes with one goal in mind - to gain employment.

E. Evaluation of work visitations & presentations to the group.

F. Group work with recent graduates who are employed or unemployed.

G. Explanation of other work considerations
   1. Wages
   2. Fringe Benefits
   3. Taxes and other deductions
   4. Credit Unions
   5. Unions
   6. Budgetary Planning

Week XVI - Final Evaluation

1. Coursework
2. Work experience
3. Community involvement
4. Personal Growth

RATIONALE FOR THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THIS COURSE

A. GROUP PROCESS - Hopefully, the group atmosphere of this course will remove the stigma of the traditional classroom where these students have not met with too much success. The group can be supportive and an informational resource.

B. THE SMALL CLASS SIZE- The benefits of the group process are severely limited when the group is larger than ten. By limiting the class size to twenty, two groups of 5-8 can function under the auspices of the instructional team while the others work on individual areas of interest and concern. All students, as a result, can use the group as a "home base."

C. GUEST SPEAKERS - Involving the community in preparing its youth for employment can have many advantages. First of all, meeting with people in different levels of business and industry can give the student a better understanding of how an organization functions;and he can visualize how he will fit into the structure. Secondly, role models are important to the slow learner. What he might not glean from books, he may learn from someone he admires and respects. Third, utilizing people outside the closed society of the school gives educators and students a more accurate picture of various aspects of the community besides a comprehensive employment picture. Fourth, many people who are not in education would derive satisfaction from working with young people. This gives them that chance.

D. WORK VISITATION - While the student may not actually engage in the real work involved during his visit, he does get a chance to get out of school and meet the kinds of people he may be spending the rest of his life with - their values, beliefs, opinions, etc. He may also have the chance to actually do some of the work. Role models can evolve from this activity with the same benefits mentioned above. By reporting back to the group, the student has a chance to share his experience with those who may not be able to have the same opportunity. This makes him a contributing member of the class and makes education a two-way street.

E. THREE MEMBER INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM - Because this class is geared for the slow learner, a teacher who specializes in dealing with these young people is needed to help them understand the academic areas of the course work. A counselor who is adept in vocational choice and planning is necessary for obvious reasons. A paraprofessional or volunteer to keep students' records and arrange community involvement can also be used to aid the students in their individualized work.

F. TWO PERIOD TIME BLOCK - This is necessary to give speakers enough time to get their information across and to relate to the students. Furthermore, if the student is to become truly involved during his work visitations, he needs more than one class period per day.

FORMER STUDENTS INVOLVED IN CLASS (GROUP) ACTIVITIES - Realistically, not all students will find satisfying employment after one 16 week course. Therefore, the instructional team can continue to serve in a consulting capacity, for those who have not found work after taking this course. By including those former classmates who are both employed and unemployed in the group process, current students will have first hand impressions of the working world with all its advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, past and present students can see that education is a continuing process that does not end on graduation night.